

YMCA - 10/22/74

Dear Harold,

I have nothing but good news! Hope same at your end.

Before I get into my excellent meeting with Congressman Trent Lott, I want to answer your request, and also tell you about something that bothers me, perhaps unnecessarily. I am delighted that I can do something to help. I will check the Memphis papers every day at the Library where I work, and copy everything relevant + send to you. During your last trip down here, had you had time to visit my home in Long Beach, you would have seen my extensive clipping file, which begins 11/22/63. I'll send you, enclosed, all I have now about the Ray hearing.

Which brings me to what's bothering me. When you've read the ^{enclosed} clippings you'll understand what I mean. (I take it you don't already have these, though maybe you know more about them.) You have never mentioned your opinion of Livingston, except to say that he is in the case "pro forma" only.

I know that in MS, when a prisoner gets an out-of-state attorney, they must get local counsel to associate. I assume that this is what you mean. But unless I misunderstand the enclosed clippings, which are from scurrilous tabloids, Livingston has been doing more than acting as "pro forma" counsel! I am not a lawyer yet, so perhaps I am unqualified to judge these matters, but I have completed a heavy course in Ethics.

In MS, ~~we have~~ the State Bar Association has ~~adopted~~ adopted the ABA Canons, and it is considered a serious breach to discuss evidence in a case beyond the court record, and doing so during a proceeding in progress is grounds for disbarment. Perhaps Tennessee is more lax, but I am concerned about the effect. The State could charge that Livingston is trying to prejudice potential jurors, and thus delay a new trial even more. Also, the State is probably aware of what he has, but is it not unwise to

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broadcast it to them that he now has it, too?

The Constitution, of course, protects the right of a prisoner to protest his innocence to the highest heavens, and to complain to anyone in the world who'll listen, about the conditions of his confinement + the circumstances surrounding the denial of his liberty. But I question the strategical advisability, if not the propriety, of a lawyer calling his client out of prison for a press conference to announce the cornerstone of its defense.

I have kept close to ~~the~~ my heart the secret you told me, that Ray was at a gas station, filling a tire with air, at the moment Dr. King was shot. BUT, as you can see, that cat is out of the bag now, thanks to Livingston.

(with Ray + Livingston)

Did this press conference have Bud's approval? Or was it done while he was abroad, and Jim Lesar's back was turned?

Harold, maybe I'm way out of line in saying these things, and if so, please forgive me. You know that all I want is the truth, and full justice. And after our bitter experience with some of the men whom Garrison let do him in, I well know that these ideals are not served by men who misuse second-hand information to make a big splash in the press. Perhaps, however, I've misjudged the situation. Please let me know about this.

Now to the good news. My meeting with Congressman Trent Lott was wonderful. He graciously accepted a petition I gave him, and my Bill of Particulars, a copy of which is enclosed for your information. To skip details, it was an excellent meeting. He interrupted his re-election campaign to meet me at his District Office. He showed up exactly on time, and ushered me into a large conference room, where we talked non-stop for a solid 35 minutes. It was a vigorous discussion. His ability to comprehend complex details was surprising, but even more so was his agreement

with my "case." Ultimately, he agreed that the assassination of President Kennedy was a conspiracy, with more than one assassin. He acknowledged that letting these men get away with it was a probable cause of the killings of Dr. King and Sen. Robert Kennedy. If, after letting these men get away with it, I argued, what could stop them from taking over the country the next time? A General in the Pentagon could call a mid-western base on "Red alert" during the confusion, and we could have a nuclear disaster. Yes, he said, it bothered him after the President was killed, that the Cabinet was in an airplane over the Pacific, all of them successors to the office of The Presidency.

He was interested in Hunt + Oswald in Mexico, and Sturgis in Dallas — spelled out in enclosed Bill.

I disagree with your statement that he is "unlikely to do anything of real meaning." If his workload does not crush him in the meantime, he may do just the right things in just the right places + ways, to those "right" people with whom he has credibility + position few others have. Gonzalez, as I understand it, is going to introduce a bill, to re-open the case(s), on the floor, and it will be referred to the Judiciary Committee. Lott says he will try to get the Chairman ^{at least} to put it on the agenda. (It seems terrible to me that the Chairman has ^{the} sole power!) This would be the beginning of the explosion, ~~if~~ provided it is handled well.

And that is why I am offering, to him and to you, ~~if~~ when the time is ripe, to drop what I'm doing now, and come to Washington, to work full-time on this case. You are probably the only person I know who understands + appreciates my deep feelings about this. It only frustrates me to be so far from the battle + in so little a position to do anything about it. I hope we can be together again before much longer.

your friend,

Jim